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REPORTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES: SOCIAL QUESTIONS

Advancement of women

Report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on its seventeenth session

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I. MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

1. At its seventeenth session, the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) reviewed the implementation of the programme of activities, as approved by the Board of Trustees at its sixteenth session, for the period from January to December 1996, the first year of the work programme for the biennium 1996-1997 (see INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.2).

2. The attention of the Economic and Social Council is drawn to the Board's deliberations on the financial situation of INSTRAW (part VII), and the framework for research and training for the biennium 1998-1999 and beyond (part VIII) and to its conclusions (part X).

3. The period under review has been characterized by a threefold process: the first related to changes of global scope at both the economic and the social levels; the second resulted from the policy decisions, mandates and plans of action of the different United Nations conferences, as well as several measures of an institutional nature pertaining to the functioning of the United Nations system; and the third, the concrete issues, related to the implementation of the 1996 work programme of INSTRAW, including institutional matters relevant to the functioning of the Institute.

II. STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

4. At its 1st meeting, under agenda item 4, the Board discussed the outcome of the fourth session of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), which was held at INSTRAW headquarters on 12 and 13 February 1997. The item was introduced by D. Gail Saunders, Chairperson of the Committee. In considering the agenda item, the Board had before it documents INSTRAW/BT/1997/CRP.1 and INSTRAW/BT/1997/CRP.3.

5. The Chairperson of the Strategic Planning Committee provided an overview of the composition, organizational matters and role of the Strategic Planning Committee and its recommendations, as contained in document INSTRAW/BT/1997/CRP.3.

6. The Chairperson emphasized that the Strategic Planning Committee did not agree with the decision made regarding the evaluation of the work performance of the SPC members and Board members as presented in document INSTRAW/BT/1997/CRP.1, paragraph 11 (c).

7. At its fourth session, the Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the work performance, administrative and financial situation and logistical requirements of INSTRAW. The Committee noted that vacancy announcements to fill P-2, P-3 and P-4 posts had been circulated and noted with concern the report on the financial situation of INSTRAW.

8. The Chairperson pointed out the SPC recommendations contained in document INSTRAW/BT/1997/CRP.3 on the design of a fund-raising strategy and the hiring of a high-level consultant for that purpose. The Institute should initiate contacts with international research institutions with the objective of establishing mechanisms to benefit from their expertise in the field. In reviewing the progress reports, SPC noted that some programmes had been successfully completed, while others had been either delayed or postponed for various reasons; the Board should prioritize those programmes based on their merits and the availability of financial and human resources. The Board should consider the current constraints on the Institute, and new programmes should be limited until the uncertain situation ended. Finally, SPC requested that documents be made available to the Board members at least four weeks prior to a Board meeting.

9. The report of SPC also established guidelines for the regular functioning of SPC, taking into account its composition, organizational matters and role. In regard to its composition, SPC recommended that there be five members, taking into account equitable geographical distribution. The members should include the President, Vice-President and two other regions and the former President of the Board, if still a member. The representative of the regional commissions should act as an ex officio member.

10. The Board noted that SPC did not currently include a representative from Eastern Europe.

11. The representative of the regional commissions stressed the importance of the Strategic Planning Committee as a solid mechanism for discussing substantive matters, which facilitated the work of the Board of Trustees. She pointed out that the fourth session was the first at which substantive issues pertinent to the functioning of the Institute, rather than procedural matters, had been discussed. She recommended that SPC be a part of the Board.

12. The Board expressed appreciation to SPC for the clarification on some substantive issues and requested that certain overlapping points be discussed under the relevant items of the agenda of the seventeenth session. The Board expressed their appreciation to the outgoing SPC members.

13. The Board then elected by acclamation the following new members of the Strategic Planning Committee:

President:	Selma Acuner (Turkey)
Vice-President:	Esther Asthon (Bolivia)
Members:	Mona Chemali Khalaf (Lebanon) Els Postel-Coster (Netherlands) Noëlie Kangoye (Burkina Faso) A representative of the regional commissions.

III. PROGRESS REPORT OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR

14. At the 2nd meeting, under agenda item 5, the Acting Director of INSTRAW introduced the progress report on the implementation of the work programme of INSTRAW in 1996 and the matters related to the operations and functioning of the Institute (INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.2 and Corr.1). The substantive officer presented the documents INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.2/Add.1 and Corr.1 and INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.2/Add.2-6. The Acting Director also introduced document INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.2/Add.7/Rev.1 on other activities related to the research and training programmes.

15. The Acting Director explained that the progress report was prepared with a different structure, enabling a more comprehensive coverage of the Institute's research and training programmes. This initiative was undertaken in response to several requests made by Member States during meetings of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and reiterated by donors, as well as the recommendations made by the Board, which had highlighted the need to improve the quality of the documents and the substantive presentation. This form of reporting, although instituted on an experimental basis, will also enable the Institute to overcome the existing perception that its work overlaps and duplicates the work of other United Nations bodies and organizations.

16. The first part of the report contained points, reflections and analysis on policy issues, institutional matters and implementation of programmes. The second part related to the work programme.

17. The Acting Director pointed out that the report contained a brief analysis of the global changes that impact the status of women. The report also addressed some of the recent developments in the United Nations system in relation to women's issues, gender mainstreaming and poverty eradication, as well as considerations pertaining to the 1997 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

18. The Acting Director described some management changes taking place at United Nations Headquarters, such as the hiring freeze and recruitment restrictions, which have had an indirect impact on the timing of INSTRAW vacancy announcements. The Secretariat has also implemented new computerized programmes for evaluation (the performance appraisal system (PAS)) and accounting (the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS)), to which INSTRAW headquarters has no access. Nevertheless, its professional staff and accounting process are managed by the new PAS and IMIS under the supervision of the Executive Officer of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat.

19. In relation to the Board's recommendation that INSTRAW start reporting to the Second Committee of the General Assembly on agenda items related to the Institute's research and training activities, the INSTRAW management had requested guidance from the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly secretariats and was still awaiting a reply. Furthermore, the Acting Director pointed out that INSTRAW had improved its inter-agency cooperation within the United Nations system, which entailed the preparation of various reports and inputs and constituted additional work for INSTRAW staff. The Acting Director

also outlined the different steps taken during 1996 to modernize the Institute: its communications system was improved by installing the Internet, two e-mail addresses (one at its headquarters and another at the liaison office), preparing a homepage, modernizing the telephone and fax system and increasing the circulation of INSTRAW reports and correspondence in its three official languages. (The Acting Director noted that while on missions she had distributed 4,900 INSTRAW documents and pieces of public information material herself.) The Institute's premises had been waterproofed and had undergone restoration.

20. Following the Acting Director's presentation, she called upon the programme officers to present the addenda summarizing their work programmes.

21. During the discussion on administrative and general programme support, the Board raised the issue of the terms of reference of the job description for the post of Director (D-2) and stated that in accordance with article IV, paragraph 1, of the statute of INSTRAW, "The Director shall be appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, after consultation with the Board". The Board pointed out that on previous occasions it had not been consulted on the appointment of the Director. The Board further inquired about the stage at which it would be consulted and the procedural mechanisms for appointing a Director. The Acting Administrative Officer replied that the preliminary terms of reference for the job description had been prepared in the Institute and forwarded to the Executive Office of INSTRAW in the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in New York for finalization by the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM). The Acting Administrative Officer added that the Institute's Administration Unit was mainly involved in the appointment of staff at the General Service level and that OHRM was in charge of undertaking the appointment of staff in the Professional category and above. She therefore suggested that further information on the matter be sought from the representative of the Secretary-General, in view of her long-standing experience in the area of administration and management.

22. The representative of the regional commissions explained that the United Nations had specific rules and regulations related to job descriptions for all posts. The Director's job description could not be prepared at the Institute since there was no staff above the D-2 position who could draft the relevant terms of reference. In addition, she explained that such posts were reviewed at the Secretariat by a senior panel and not through the regular appointment and promotion panels.

23. The Board recalled article IV of the statute of INSTRAW and emphasized that it was entitled to be consulted on the appointment of the Institute's Director, who should have specific academic qualifications and experience in management, communications and policy analysis.

24. The Acting Administrative Officer recalled that the 1996-1997 programme budget had been elaborated and approved on the basis of the Institute's cash balance as at 31 December 1995, plus the expected level of contributions envisaged for that period. Given the decrease in funds received by INSTRAW during 1996 (which had been the trend for the past three years), it had been necessary to reformulate and decrease the original level of budgetary

requirements for 1997. The present availability of funds at the Institute was sufficient to complete the programme of activities approved for the biennium 1996-1997, but the proposed programme budget for 1998-1999 would need to be formulated on the basis of the resources available to INSTRAW as at 1 January 1998. The Acting Administrative Officer urged the Board to give serious consideration to fund-raising endeavours to provide the Institute with the funding required for the next biennium.

25. Referring to the subprogramme on women, media and communications, the Board requested clarification on the criteria used for selection of the consultant engaged to conduct the survey in the Latin America and Caribbean region. Further clarification was requested as it was an opportunity for interaction between INSTRAW and its focal point in Costa Rica. The Board also requested information on the dissemination of the survey questionnaire and the response rate since the representative of the regional commissions had explained that ECLAC was receiving only a 20 per cent response to survey questionnaires.

26. The desk officer explained that the consultant from Costa Rica was a communications expert, who had prepared the substantive input of the INSTRAW panel on media and communications for the advancement of women at the NGO Forum in Beijing in 1995. The desk officer further explained that INSTRAW did not have a counterpart in Costa Rica and that the response rate to the questionnaire in the Dominican Republic was quite high, although in other countries it was a matter of concern as the questionnaire had been sent to 700 organizations. The officer requested the Board to consider reallocating funds within the programme in order to organize a national workshop to test the manual on women, media and communications in Barbados as part of programme element 3, output 3.

27. In discussing the subprogramme on economic and political empowerment of women, the Board requested further clarification on the methodology used for measuring the political participation of women and the indicators applied. The desk officer provided clarification on the issue of indicators and methodology used in the three selected countries and explained that in the next phase the studies would be used as training material to be prepared in cooperation with the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ILO) at Turin, Italy.

28. In discussing the subprogramme on women, environment and sustainable development, the Board requested information on the future activities following completion of the outputs envisaged for 1996. The desk officer replied that at this point there was no clear indication. She requested reallocation of funds to continue inter-agency cooperation and training seminars at the national level as follow-up to the successful implementation of the programme in 1996. The promotion of the training package on women, environmental management and sustainable development will be enhanced in 1997.

29. The Acting Director explained that at the briefing for the delegates attending the next session of the Commission on the Status of Women, scheduled for 4 March 1997, there would be a presentation of the training manual, which would also be presented during the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the special session of the General Assembly to review and assess Agenda 21.

30. The Board recommended that the training package be translated into French as such training material was needed in French-speaking countries. The Board underlined the need for translations and stated that the Frederich E. Stiftung Foundation was very much interested in disseminating information on the subject and could be contacted to pursue translation, and the Arab League could be contacted for financial assistance in translating the material into Arabic. The desk officer added that translation into all languages was crucial but costly as it should be done by specialized translators.

31. The Acting Director commented that part of the material had been presented at the workshop on the role of women in sustainable development, held at Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in November 1996. The African Development Bank (ADB) and the Energy Division of the Economic Commission for Africa had expressed their interest in seeking potential collaboration in co-funding the translation. The European Training Foundation could also be contacted for translation purposes. The participant from South Africa at the workshop had expressed her appreciation of the training package on women and new and renewable sources of energy, which had been very useful in her work.

32. The Board requested the list of participating countries and inquired as to the criteria for selecting the participants for the subregional training seminar "Women, Environmental Management and Sustainable Development", held at the ILO Turin Centre from 23 to 27 September 1996. The desk officer explained that the selection had been made in accordance with the Board's recommendation to conduct a seminar for former Eastern and Central European countries. Participants matched the profile of the target groups of the training package. The ILO Turin Centre had undertaken the logistical arrangements for the identification and selection of the participants and the final selection had been made by INSTRAW.

33. In discussing the subprogramme on statistics and indicators on gender issues, the Board strongly urged INSTRAW to carry out the pilot-testing of INSTRAW training materials on the use of gender-specific statistics and indicators in policy designs in Eastern and Central European countries as originally planned and welcomed the possibility of conducting this activity in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), particularly in conjunction with the training seminar which the Commission was organizing for the region in May 1997. To that end, the representative of the regional commissions offered to assist INSTRAW by facilitating communication between INSTRAW and ECE. The Board also emphasized the importance of organizing a similar activity in Western Asia in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The Board congratulated INSTRAW on the successful completion of the publication Valuation of Household Production and the Satellite Accounts.

34. In discussing the information, communication and documentation unit, the Board expressed its concern regarding the delay of INSTRAW News, mentioning that lack of funds and lack of personnel did not justify not having an issue of INSTRAW News in 1996, a situation that had negative effects on the overall visibility of the Institute, and reiterated that INSTRAW News was one of the Institute's priorities. The Board stated that the double issue (Nos. 24/25) did not compensate for the missing issues and referred to the lack of communication between INSTRAW and its focal points.

35. The Acting Director explained that a regular issue of INSTRAW News contained 40 pages, while the double issue contained more than 70. Part of the delay in the preparation of that particular issue had been due to the effort to comply with the strong recommendation from the Board to drastically improve the content, form and style, which implied longer working hours for the already overburdened staff working on INSTRAW News.

36. The Board inquired about the computer equipment available at INSTRAW and highlighted the need to obtain high-capacity equipment in order to access databases and other such documentation material, particularly since INSTRAW headquarters was away from mainstream bibliographical resources. The Board also requested clarification on the status and future plans for the CD-ROM, taking into account the amount of funds already invested in this project.

37. The Acting Director explained that producing a CD-ROM was a proposal of a project for the Fourth World Conference on Women. However, it had not materialized. Moreover, other alternatives for completing the project should be carefully analysed to ensure the optimum quality of the output and resources should be allocated accordingly.

38. In relation to the other research and training activities, a Board member expressed her Government's wish that INSTRAW cooperate very closely with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

39. The Board sought clarification on the document containing guidelines for recruiting consultants to which the Acting Director had referred in her presentation. The Board had discussed the need for a document on the substantive aspects of consultancy recruitment, while the document mentioned basically covered contractual procedures. The Board pointed out that the United Nations system had clear and well-defined guidelines for contractual procedures and questioned the need for the document. The President of the Board suggested that the issue be discussed in an informal session. The Board agreed and decided that the final decision should be taken under agenda item 8.

IV. FOCAL POINTS: NETWORKING

40. At its 3rd meeting, under agenda item 6, on focal points and networking, the Board had before it documents INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.3 and Add.1. In introducing the item, the Acting Director stated that, taking into account the comments expressed by focal points at the working lunch organized by INSTRAW in September 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and in compliance with several recommendations made by the Board at its sixteenth session, the responsible desk officer had prepared a booklet consolidating the information available on focal points, such as their main areas of concern, objectives, benefits and steps taken for their establishment among other things.

41. In describing the extent and quality of INSTRAW networking with focal points, the Acting Director referred to several issues related to the effective functioning of this mechanism: redefinition of the objectives and advantages of having focal points; their contribution to the Institute; the scope of interaction with INSTRAW; nomination procedure; methods for performance

evaluation; and number of focal points per country. The Acting Director pointed out that those objectives should be updated periodically in accordance with specific characteristics of the different groups of focal points. The Acting Director mentioned that time was necessary for careful study and analysis of the documents presented by the candidates and their institutional performance or experience in research and training activities in the thematic areas of the INSTRAW work programme. She requested the Board's guidance on this issue. The Board concurred with the comments made by the Acting Director.

42. The Acting Director mentioned that there were different categories of focal points. Some of them required financial assistance to carry out activities related to the INSTRAW research and training programme. She suggested that for the next biennium a small increase be considered in the already modest allocation of seed money.

43. The Acting Director brought the Brazilian focal point's request to the attention of the Board and highlighted the multiplier effect of mainstreaming the use of gender concepts in the development planning process, as described in the INSTRAW publication Gender Concepts in Development Planning - Basic Approach. The Brazilian focal point used the publication as reference material and had had it translated into Portuguese at its own expense. The Acting Director asked the Board to consider the importance of attending to that focal point's request to further enhance the mainstreaming of gender concepts.

44. The Acting Director also brought to the attention of the Board three new applications for focal points: one from Argentina, one from Azerbaijan and one from the Russian Federation. She asked the Board to give particular consideration to the validity of establishing a second focal point in Argentina. The Board reiterated the need to establish concrete guidelines for focal points and networking activities. The Board agreed to defer a decision on all three applications until its next session.

45. The representative of the regional commissions pointed out that INSTRAW had established clear criteria. There were three very well defined types of potential INSTRAW focal points: national machineries, academic and research institutions, and grass-roots women's organizations. Each of them had different expectations in their relationship with INSTRAW and although the Institute stood to gain different benefits from the three categories, the reciprocal relationship had never implied that INSTRAW would provide financial support.

46. The Board requested clarification on the procedures for allocating funds to focal points and on the type of support, technical and/or financial, provided to them. The Board also raised the issue of the lack of communication between INSTRAW and its focal points. The Board also questioned the practice of having focal points represent INSTRAW at meetings and conferences and pointed out that it had proven useless for building networking. The Board requested a cost-benefit evaluation of this method of networking and suggested that the mobilization of funds be reviewed to ascertain whether funds should be used for revitalizing "dormant focal points" or for newly established focal points.

47. The Acting Director explained that experience had shown that focal points demanded support in terms of materials, joint activities and financial

resources, all of which implied costs to INSTRAW. The Institute should give very specific and clear indications on the purpose for which the money was allocated, as well as on the expected multiplier effect. As to lack of communication, the Acting Director responded by providing a list of correspondence and materials sent to the focal points and suggested that in future the Institute should require feedback from the focal points. Regarding focal point representation, such activities did not imply any cost for INSTRAW. Focal points only attended important meetings where, due to financial constraints, INSTRAW could not be present.

V. INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION: REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

48. At its 3rd meeting, the Board considered agenda item 7, on inter-agency cooperation and the regional commissions. It had before it document INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.4. The Acting Director introduced the report and stressed that the lack of staff hindered the Institute's ability to provide proper follow-up activities requiring collaboration and cooperation with other organizations and bodies, including the regional commissions. The Acting Director explained that INSTRAW attached great importance to collaboration with the regional commissions as they had a thorough understanding of the scope of regional thematic priorities that could be incorporated into the INSTRAW research and training programme. INSTRAW had also invited the regional commissions to contribute to the next issue of INSTRAW News, which would be devoted to the analysis of women's roles and equal participation in natural resources management and mainstreaming the concept of gender in planning sustainable development.

49. The representative of the regional commissions observed that all the commissions gave great priority to mainstreaming the concept of gender in their activities and that research and analysis was being undertaken for the implementation of programmes on mainstreaming gender. The representative of the regional commissions mentioned that ECLAC, with the cooperation of the German Technical Cooperation Organization (GTZ), was organizing training workshops on gender aimed at incorporating a gender perspective in all technical assistance and was concentrating on fewer themes in a more in-depth manner. For instance, the central ECLAC themes currently included sustainable development, poverty and the process of empowering women. ECE was monitoring gender activities in its region and in the subregions of Central and Eastern Europe. The representative of the regional commissions made special mention of a workshop designed to link non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with national machineries for women.

50. The resident representative and coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Dominican Republic informed the Board of the collaborative efforts that INSTRAW and UNDP had successfully undertaken during the period under review. The resident representative mentioned the inter-agency committee on gender issues, which was composed of all the local agencies of the United Nations in the Dominican Republic and for which INSTRAW served as first coordinator. He also referred to the joint efforts of UNDP and INSTRAW in setting up and coordinating the promotion of the Fiftieth Anniversary Interactive Exhibit, which was currently in the city of Puerto Plata, and invited the members of the Board to visit the site.

51. With respect to communications to promote inter-agency collaboration and enhance the interaction with regional commissions, the Board reiterated the need to upgrade the computer equipment of the Institute. The Board referred to the fact that there was an enormous need for gender training and suggested that INSTRAW consider training the staff to become trainers on gender issues and that funds could be sought for that purpose.

52. In addition, the Acting Director suggested the possibility of hiring qualified experts to come and lecture INSTRAW staff. However, the present financial allocations did not allow any of these options. The representative of the Secretary-General informed the Board of a meeting for United Nations staff being organized by UNDP for the first week of March 1997.

53. The Social Affairs Officer posted in New York pointed out that there were several types of training and mentioned that training to be trainers per se could be explored with the International Training Centre of ILO in Turin, which served as the training centre of the United Nations. She also mentioned various types of training offered at United Nations Headquarters such as training in the new performance appraisal system (PAS), the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) and new computer software. So far, only staff members at the INSTRAW Liaison Office in New York had benefited from the training conducted in New York.

VI. OTHER MATTERS RELATED TO THE FUNCTIONING OF THE INSTITUTE

54. At the 3rd meeting, the Acting Director introduced the item on other matters related to the functioning of the Institute. The Board had before it two documents: INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.5, which described the fellowship and internship programmes, the Institute's database of consultants and its roster of experts, and INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.5/Add.1 on the functioning of the INSTRAW Liaison Office in New York which was introduced by the Social Affairs Officer from that Office.

55. With respect to the fellowship and internship programmes, the Acting Director explained that in recent years, no fellowships had been granted at the Institute. The internship programme consisted of two parts. The first was the internship programme at the Liaison Office, which provided substantial support to the functioning of the Liaison Office. The three interns performed very well in carrying out the programmes entrusted to them. The second internship programme, at INSTRAW headquarters, had not been able to respond to national and international requests, owing mainly to a lack of staff who could organize and monitor the work, as well as to a lack of facilities. The Acting Director proposed that the Board consider the possibility of deferring the implementation of the second part of the internship programme until human and financial resources became available.

56. As a result of the INSTRAW round table at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), the Institute for Peace and Development of Guatemala had approached INSTRAW seeking collaboration in terms of joint research and/or training programmes on women and conflict resolution and peace-building. In addition, CERFE, an Italian research institute, and the

Association of Women for Development and the Struggle against Social Exclusion (ASDO) had also expressed interest in conducting joint research with INSTRAW in the areas of statistics and the environment in Eastern and Central European countries. The Acting Director reminded the Board of the content of paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 46/99 of 16 December 1991 concerning the INSTRAW mandate to orient its research programmes to meet new challenges and anticipate, where possible, emerging areas of concern related to women and development. The Acting Director sought the Board's advice on whether the proposed initiatives should be pursued.

57. In presenting document INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.5/Add.1, the Social Affairs Officer from the INSTRAW Liaison Office expressed deep appreciation to the Acting Director for her guidance and support on the activities carried out by the Liaison Office and for her appraisal of the staff member. She explained to the Board various tasks undertaken by herself and the Administrative Assistant whose hard work and performance she commended. The Social Affairs Officer pointed out that three internships had been successfully completed in 1996. One of the interns was given a short-term assignment to assist the Social Affairs Officer. The Liaison Office was equipped with appropriate computers and had access to the Internet and e-mail.

58. The Social Affairs Officer elaborated on the importance of inter-agency cooperation and INSTRAW participation in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and various subsidiary bodies. She also pointed out that the Acting Director attended United Nations inter-agency and intergovernmental meetings, conducted bilateral discussions with various delegations and briefed INSTRAW donors. The Acting Director had attempted to secure additional office space in New York as the office space available was insufficient to cover all the Liaison Office needs in New York.

59. The Board appraised the work done by the INSTRAW Social Affairs Officer and her colleagues in the Liaison Office, expressed appreciation to the Acting Director for her support to the Liaison Office and recommended further strengthening.

60. The Board requested information on the representation activities that encompassed travel by the Acting Director. The Board also requested procedural clarification on the status of the document entitled "Guidelines for INSTRAW's identification and selection of consultants and evaluation of products related to the substantive functioning of the Institute". Clarification was sought because the paper did not contain an official document symbol for the seventeenth session.

61. In relation to that paper, the representative of the regional commissions pointed out that INSTRAW, as part of the United Nations system, had to follow long-established procedures for contracting and evaluating consultants and emphasized that the Institute could not propose different guidelines and procedures.

62. In reply to the representation question, the Acting Director explained that there were four types of representation: (i) representation at the Director level within the United Nations system, including permanent missions,

Governments of Member States and fund-raising activities; (ii) representation at United Nations Headquarters and attendance at meetings usually carried out by the Liaison Office with the assistance of interns; (iii) representation undertaken by desk officers; and (iv) representation at INSTRAW headquarters, which was divided between the Acting Director and the desk officers, depending on the subject matter.

63. In relation to the informal paper on guidelines, the Acting Director explained that a preliminary draft had been brought to the attention of the members of SPC attending the informal SPC session in Beijing, as part of the preliminary draft of the framework for research. A second draft had been distributed for informal reading at the sixteenth session of the Board. The first two versions, as well as the third one, were simplified listings of the various procedures and rules in United Nations manuals and were intended to facilitate the implementation of those rules by INSTRAW staff in the selection and evaluation of consultants.

64. The representative of the Secretary-General commented that the United Nations had a standard set of administrative rules, procedures and regulations. She brought to the attention of the Board the established rules and procedures and cautioned that the guidelines elaborated by INSTRAW should be cleared by the Executive Office and approved by the Office of Human Resources Management, the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts and the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

65. The Board suggested that the guidelines by INSTRAW be used in-house on an experimental basis, and that the issue be discussed again at the next Board session. The President of the Board suggested that the Board members discuss the document in an informal meeting. The President then stated that the Board would not consider the guidelines as an official document of the session.

66. After the explanations provided by the Acting Director of the different steps and her recommendation to the Office of Legal Affairs for approval of the statute, the Board welcomed the establishment of the INSTRAW Staff Association. The Board sought information on the channels of communication between the Staff Association and the Institute's management.

VII. FINANCIAL SITUATION OF INSTRAW

67. At its 4th meeting, under agenda item 9, on the financial situation of INSTRAW, the Board had before it document INSTRAW/BT/1997/CRP.2, which was introduced by the Acting Director.

68. The Acting Administrative Officer explained that the objectives of the document were: (i) to provide the Board with a comprehensive overview of the financial situation of the Institute at the beginning of the current biennium; (ii) to explain the elements taken into consideration when preparing and approving the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997; (iii) to provide information on the budgetary performance of INSTRAW during 1996; and (iv) to present an estimated forecast of the financial status expected at the end of 1997, the end of the bienhium.

69. The Acting Administrative Officer further explained that the cash balance as at 1 January 1996 plus the contributions received during 1996 resulted in an income level of US$ 4.3 million. Of that amount, INSTRAW had to set aside a contingency reserve and deduct expenditures and obligations incurred in 1996 (including the 4 per cent programme support costs to the United Nations Secretariat). On the basis of the above, INSTRAW was left with a cash balance of US$ 1.79 million as at 1 January 1997.

70. The Acting Administrative Officer explained that budgetary proposals must be made on the basis of the actual cash balance and pledged/outstanding contributions, some of which were received after considerable delay. Additional contributions expected from countries that normally did not officially pledge their contributions at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities could be taken into consideration. However, the Controller's authorization of budget levels and allocations was based on the cash balance available in the United Nations Trust Fund for INSTRAW. On that basis, the estimated income for 1997 was US$ 2.2 million. If the 1997 budgetary requirements were deducted from this amount, as well as programme support costs reimbursable to the United Nations for 1997 support costs, the estimated cash balance as at 31 December 1997 would be US$ 474,920.

71. In order to prepare a preliminary work programme for the next biennium, the Acting Administrative Officer stressed the need for INSTRAW to undertake very serious and active fund-raising endeavours, an observation also made by an external auditor during an exercise conducted at the Institute in May 1996.

72. The Acting Director stated that the auditors had presented a total of 22 audit queries, all of which had been answered in detail as requested by the auditors. Some of them pertained to issues that the INSTRAW management could answer fully, while others related to different departments of the United Nations Secretariat. All queries, answers and annexes had been sent to the Executive Officers of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and the Department for Development Support and Management Services for their attention and action. The Acting Director mentioned that the report presented by the auditors most probably should be delivered to the United Nations Controller and the Budget Division and finally presented to the General Assembly. However, INSTRAW had not received any reply.

73. The Board sought clarification on the follow-up given to its recommendation, made at the sixteenth session, regarding the engagement of a fund-raising consultant. The Acting Director replied that in order to implement the recommendation, she had sought the advice of several senior officers of the United Nations Secretariat with experience in financial matters, in addition to the advice of two managers of the former Chemical Bank - United Nations branch (now the Chase Manhattan Bank). In all instances, the advice was that before hiring any consultant and attempting to conduct a fund-raising campaign, INSTRAW should clearly define what it had to offer and its marketable products.

74. The representative of the Secretary-General endorsed the comments made by the Acting Director, particularly as they pertained to making use of current opportunities for the implementation of programmes to meet the concerns expressed by member States. Furthermore, she informed the Board that the

proposed merger was not a closed matter. She added that a reform package would be presented by the Secretary-General in July 1997, which would cover very concrete issues in the economic and social areas. She urged the Board to carefully evaluate the INSTRAW programme along the lines of the thematic work programme of the Commission on the Status of Women, without altering the current work of INSTRAW. The representative of the Secretary-General also highlighted the importance of being sensitive to donors' opinions.

75. The Acting Director informed the Board that every time she undertook any mission to attend an official meeting, such as the United Nations University meeting in July in Tokyo, the FAO-SEGA (Collaborative Socio-Economic Gender Analysis Training Programme) meeting in September in Rome and the UNESCO energy conference in Paris in December 1996, she visited the United Nations departments in the ministries of foreign affairs and the women's machineries and focal points in order to present the INSTRAW work programme, to distribute INSTRAW public information material and documents and, above all, to encourage financial contributions to the INSTRAW core budget or earmarked programmes. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France had shown an interest in participating in future joint activities in French-speaking countries. To that end, INSTRAW should submit well in advance, in accordance with the fiscal year, concrete proposals for the Government of France to consider for 1998.

76. The Acting Director had presented similar requests to the Governments of Japan, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Norway, Spain and Ireland.

77. The Board requested information regarding the earnings from the sale of publications and recommended that it be presented in table format. The Acting Director informed the Board that after several months of lengthy negotiations, a one-year agreement with the United Nations Sales Section had been signed, on an experimental basis, in order to sell certain INSTRAW publications. The publication entitled Gender Concepts in Development Planning - Basic Approach, with a second edition of 700 units, had been relatively successful. Other publications, such as The Migration of Women, Measurement and Valuation of Unpaid Contribution, Credit for Women and Content Discontent had also been well received. However, it was too early to have received any revenue. The training package on environmental management and sustainable development had been requested by a number of United Nations agencies and other institutions, and as soon as it was finalized at the ILO Turin Centre, sales would be undertaken.

78. As a promotional campaign, INSTRAW was organizing three briefings for the delegations attending the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the special session of the General Assembly in June 1997.

79. In response to the suggestion made by the Acting Director that the Bureau of the Board should serve for a two-year period and be elected in years when the biennial programme budget was not considered, the Board expressed strong disagreement.

80. The Board requested INSTRAW to provide more information on the status of implementation of each programme and the availability of funds remaining in each programme and emphasized that the information should be presented in table

format. At the briefings by the responsible desk officers, the following points were made:

(a) The subprogramme on women, environment and sustainable development required an additional US$ 13,000 for travel to inter-agency meetings. An additional US$ 10,000 was required for a research study on women, human settlements and natural resources management, and US$ 30,000 for a national training seminar in Eastern and Central Europe;

(b) The subprogramme on women and communications required an additional US$ 1,500 for travel;

(c) The subprogrammes on statistics and indicators on gender issues and on economic and political empowerment of women had sufficient funds to cover their activities for the biennium 1996-1997.

81. The Acting Administrative Officer indicated that the 1996-1997 budget was very limited and that external sources of funding would need to be secured to cover the above-mentioned requests for additional funds.

82. The Board urged the Acting Director to proceed with the purchase of the data-processing equipment as soon as possible so as not to jeopardize the implementation of substantive outputs that required such equipment.

83. The Board inquired about the status of the contracts for INSTRAW staff that were to be extended until 31 December 1997. The Acting Director stated that authorization for the extensions had reached INSTRAW on 31 January 1997, and the Acting Administrative Officer had informed her that the contracts and corresponding administrative documents had been prepared on 20 February 1997 for signature by the Acting Director.

84. The Board expressed the view that INSTRAW should find a means of providing career advancement and opportunity to INSTRAW staff within the Organization (G to P examinations). This matter was of particular importance to the Board in view of the fact that several INSTRAW staff members had been in service with the Institute for many years without opportunities for career development.

85. The representative of the Secretary-General explained that at the sixteenth session of the Board some efforts had been made in that regard. However, as INSTRAW was an autonomous institution with contracts limited to service within INSTRAW, the matter posed serious difficulties. The representative of the Secretary-General added that in her forthcoming meeting with the Staff Association she would take up the matter in more detail and would further explore possibilities with the appropriate offices at the United Nations Secretariat.

86. The representative of the Secretary-General informed the Board about the follow-up on questions raised by the representatives of the Staff Association of INSTRAW, particularly on procedures concerning staff-management relations, PAS and IMIS training, G to P examinations, performance evaluation reports and staff compensation.

VIII. FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH AND TRAINING FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999 AND BEYOND

87. At the opening of the 4th meeting, the President of the Board welcomed the representative of the Secretary-General in her capacity as ex officio member of the Board and invited her to make a statement (see annex I).

88. At the same meeting, under agenda item 10, the Acting Director introduced document INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.6 and Add.1-4. The Acting Director stated that in order for INSTRAW to secure funding from donor countries, it would need to deliver high quality research, improve its visibility through its publications and training materials and continue strengthening inter-agency cooperation. In this regard, the Acting Director explained that document INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.6, contained several important parts on the realities of the situation of women, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the INSTRAW mandate, summaries of past and present areas of work, an approach to the elaboration of a research and training strategy and an analysis for the biennium 1998-1999 and beyond. The Acting Director commented on the reasons why a strategy for research and training was more important than ever before and noted the essential steps needed to revitalize and empower the Institute.

89. Having reviewed the proposed framework for research and training programmes for the biennium 1998-1999 and beyond, the Board suggested that INSTRAW capitalize on the expertise already acquired during the past 17 years and continue to work on the four existing thematic areas. However, the Board also stated that high priority should be given to (a) the girl child; (b) women in armed conflict and violence against women; and (c) follow-up to Habitat II. Those issues should be addressed under the programme on empowerment and statistics and indicators.

90. The Acting Director explained that one way of acquiring visibility at the international level would be to issue a biennial publication on gender relations and on how women and women's organizations responded to new challenges. The Acting Director stressed that to have such a publication a highly qualified research team and a relatively large budget were necessary. The Acting Director stated that the idea could be implemented in the next biennium or in the following one and that it would require an earmarked funding strategy.

91. The Board expressed concern regarding the difficulties in preparing a "flagship" publication due to the Institute's financial and staffing limitations. The Board presented some opinions on how to improve INSTRAW News in order to continue its use as the INSTRAW flagship in the promotion of the Institute's work. The Acting Director explained that the purpose and target group of the proposed publication were very different from those conceived for INSTRAW News and agreed with the Board in that in the present institutional circumstances, preparing such a publication would be a very difficult task. The representative of the Secretary-General noted that publications such as the proposed "flagship" required time and resources and could be a collaborative effort. In that regard she suggested that INSTRAW consider contributing a chapter to the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, which the Division for the Advancement of Women was currently preparing.

92. The need to continue cooperation with that Division and with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations University (UNU), the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and other institutions conducting on research on gender issues should be further pursued and enhanced. In this regard, the Board noted that INSTRAW could contribute to capacity-building in research institutions in developing countries and that such efforts would be attractive to donors. The Board recommended convening an expert group meeting on research, which would contribute to establishing collaborative links between INSTRAW and research institutes in all regions and to defining the INSTRAW profile.

93. Referring to document INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.7, on the proposed framework for information, communication and documentation, the Acting Director emphasized the need to modernize the computer and printing systems of the Institute. She stressed the importance of developing a comprehensive roster of experts and mailing list and noted some of the constraints that the Institute faced in that regard.

94. With reference to the INSTRAW roster, the Board mentioned the costs and efforts involved in developing and maintaining a roster and suggested that INSTRAW should collaborate with other agencies in that regard. The representative of the regional commissions mentioned that the collaboration between INSTRAW and the regional commissions on this matter must be further pursued. The representative of the Secretary-General also pointed out that collaboration with the Division for the Advancement of Women in this matter should be considered.

95. The Board expressed concern regarding the lack of visibility of INSTRAW in Arab-speaking, French-speaking and Spanish-speaking countries due to the lack of access to INSTRAW publications in those languages. The Board requested that funds be sought for the translation of INSTRAW publications into Arabic and suggested that Arab organizations be approached for possible support and collaboration. In reference to acquisition of publications by INSTRAW, the Board mentioned that the Institute should explore the possibility of acquiring publications that might be available through the Internet.

IX. MATTERS RELATING TO THE NEXT SESSION OF THE BOARD

96. At the 4th meeting, the Acting Director introduced document INSTRAW/BT/1997/INF.1 and requested the Board to make a decision on the date of its eighteenth session, bearing in mind the relevant paragraphs of General Assembly resolutions 49/221, 50/206 and 51/211 and, in particular, the dates of the 1998 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, which would be held in November 1997 at United Nations Headquarters.

97. The Acting Director elaborated on the need for the Institute to prepare, ahead of time, a clearly defined research and training strategy for the biennium 1998-1999 and beyond in order to present concrete issues for the consideration of donors well in advance of the United Nations Pledging Conference and improve voluntary contributions.

98. In keeping with the request in paragraph 334 of the Beijing Platform for Action (A/CONF.177/20, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II), reiterated by donor countries, the Acting Director emphasized the need to reformulate the Institute's research and training programme and presented a proposal to hold a two-day resumed session of the Board in 1997, which would enable the Institute to prepare a preliminary programme budget and the newly defined work programme for donors.

99. In considering the proposal, the Board agreed on the two-day resumed session proposed by the Acting Director and reiterated the need to receive all documents in advance in order to be better prepared for the sessions. The Board also reiterated the importance of holding the international research forum, as approved at its fifteenth and sixteenth sessions, as a follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

100. The Board members concurred with the recommendation to consider (a) the need for strategic thinking on emerging and future topics of research for the advancement of women; (b) the INSTRAW research and training work programme, keeping in mind the overall activities of the United Nations; and (c) complying with the requirements of Member States and donors, who had requested streamlined and redefined research and training programmes.

101. The Acting Director recalled that although the international research forum had been approved at the fifteenth session of the Board, a modest budget had been allocated at its sixteenth session for the preparatory phase. A preliminary draft of the projected forum had been sent to donor countries in October 1996 and replies had been received in January 1997. In reference to the proposed two-day resumed session of the Board of Trustees, the Acting Director stressed that an innovative research and training strategy was crucial for the continuation of the Institute's functioning and existence.

102. In reference to the proposed international research forum, the Board proposed to hold it in Europe and possibly to seek intellectual and financial resources from the European Union. The Board suggested that the forum be attended by the INSTRAW Acting Director, three staff members, outside experts and Board members.

103. The representative of the regional commissions asked about the criteria to be used in selecting the experts who would prepare the INSTRAW research and training programme. The Board would assist the Acting Director with suggestions for the selection of experts.

104. The Board suggested that, in accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action (para. 334), the girl child should be included in the INSTRAW research programme. Women's role in sustainable development and women in situations of armed conflict could be considered priority areas in the Institute research programme.

105. The desk officer in charge of the Liaison Office explained the need for the Board to consider the revised system-wide medium-term plan on the advancement of women, 1996-2001, which had been endorsed by the Economic and Social Council

contained the inputs of the entire United Nations system on the 12 critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action.

106. The representative of the Secretary-General pointed out that the revised system-wide medium-term plan on the advancement of women was an indicative document. Some of the activities were at the level of broad programmes, while others were at the more detailed level of the programme budget and specific projects. She also pointed out that some activities were actually in train, while others were only projected. It nevertheless provided an excellent framework for Member States to gauge the work of the United Nations system in the advancement of women and was serving as a concrete base for the mid-term review of the system's activities, which would be held in 1998.

107. The Acting Director presented the work plan with a detailed schedule of activities for the expert group meeting on research and training at INSTRAW and for the resumed seventeenth session of the Board of Trustees. The Board welcomed this initiative by the Acting Director and the representative of the Secretary-General. It approved and endorsed the proposed work plan and revised the financial status of programme element 5.1 (Other research and training activities).

108. The Board decided to hold its eighteenth session the third week of February 1998 at INSTRAW headquarters in Santo Domingo.

X. CONCLUSIONS

A. Overall programme of action for INSTRAW

109. The Board praised the work undertaken by the Institute and the Acting Director in the implementation of the work programme for the biennium 1996-1997, in spite of the constraints due to financial limitations and the long-vacant posts at the senior level.

110. The Board took note of the report and recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee at its fourth session, held on 12 and 13 February 1997.

111. The Board welcomed the designation of Angela King as representative of the Secretary-General to the Board of Trustees and as Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.

112. The Board welcomed the designation of the Secretary of State of the Dominican Republic, Gladys Gutierrez, as ex officio member of the Board of Trustees representing the host country.

113. The Board welcomed INSTRAW participation in the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held at Istanbul from 3 to 14 June 1996 and recommended that INSTRAW undertake follow-up activities and allocate funds for research linking the areas of human settlements, natural resources and environmental issues.

114. The Board approved the work plan for the INSTRAW expert group meeting on research to be held in September 1997 and requested the Acting Director to undertake all the necessary measures to initiate the preparatory process and the required fund-raising activities.

115. The Board took note of the booklet consolidating information on focal points-networking. The Board agreed to a periodic evaluation of the appropriateness of focal points. It decided that the presentation of focal point candidatures required an adequate period of evaluation and scrutiny before any consideration could be given by the Board. The Board decided to defer a decision on all three applications from Argentina, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation until its next session.

116. The Board reiterated the need to upgrade the computer equipment of the Institute.

117. It suggested that INSTRAW staff be trained as trainers on gender issues and that funds be sought for that purpose.

118. The Board praised the work of the INSTRAW Liaison Office, expressed appreciation to the Acting Director for her support to the Office and recommended further strengthening of the Office within the present budget.

119. The Board suggested that, in accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action (para. 334), the girl child should be included in its research programme.

120. The Board recommended that high priority also be given to women in situations of armed conflict, violence against women, and follow-up to Habitat II as items to be addressed under the programme on empowerment and statistics and indicators, and that funds be sought actively for that purpose. At the same time, the Board suggested that INSTRAW capitalize on the expertise already acquired and continue to work on the four existing thematic areas.

121. The Board expressed appreciation for the different initiatives undertaken by the Acting Director to improve INSTRAW collaboration with United Nations entities, in particular the Division for the Advancement of Women and UNIFEM. In this regard the Board reiterated the need to expand collaboration with other organizations and bodies, such as UNU, UNRISD, the regional commissions and institutions outside the United Nations system conducting research on gender issues.

122. The Board expressed concern about the lack of visibility of INSTRAW in Arab- and French-speaking countries and requested that some funds be sought for translation of publications into those languages.

123. The Board reiterated the need for INSTRAW to improve, in the most effective manner, the information on and distribution of its publications in order to enhance the Institute's visibility. The Board reiterated the need to publish INSTRAW News twice a year on a regular basis.

124. The Board appreciated the demonstration of the INSTRAW "homepage" and also welcomed the installation of e-mail and Internet services at INSTRAW headquarters and at the Liaison Office.

B. Operational and budgetary issues

125. The Board noted that vacancy announcements for P-2, P-3 and P-4 posts had already been circulated, that applications were being evaluated and that final selection would take place soon.

126. The Board also noted that the vacancy announcement for the D-2 post would shortly be circulated. In accordance with article IV, paragraph 1, of the INSTRAW statute, the Board requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to consult with it on the appointment of the Director of the Institute.

127. The Board recommended the careful screening of candidates for consultancies at INSTRAW and requested that contracting be carried out in compliance with the standard United Nations procedures.

128. The Board was very concerned about the working conditions of the staff of the Institute since the vacancies at the managerial level placed additional responsibilities on the already limited staff. It nevertheless noted with appreciation that five of the posts were in the process of being filled and especially that the post of Director (D-2) would be a two-year appointment, subject to availability of funds.

129. The Board welcomed the establishment of the Staff Association and looked forward to continued cooperation between the Board and the staff. The Board members were confident that communication between staff and management would be enhanced and would contribute to improving the working environment at the Institute.

130. The Board recommended that INSTRAW adopt a standard format for documents, providing for: (a) a succinct but thorough statement on the implementation status of each programme and output; (b) a financial statement showing original allocation, expenditure incurred and available balance. INSTRAW should abide by current rules concerning the length of United Nations documents.

131. The Board noted with concern that for technical and administrative reasons, some programmes had not yet been completed or had been delayed. Other programmes that had been successfully completed according to schedule needed additional funds for their further implementation.

132. The Board noted with concern the status of the Institute's financial resources and reiterated the need to make an active and strong fund-raising effort to ensure an adequate flow of contributions to the INSTRAW Trust Fund.

133. The Board strongly recommended that immediate action be taken by the United Nations Secretariat to link the Institute to IMIS and PAS and provide the necessary training to INSTRAW staff in order to enhance the efficient handling of the Institute's financial matters.

134. The Board decided to hold a two-day resumed session on 8-9 September 1997 to discuss and approve the research and training agenda and the preliminary programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 and thereby facilitate the timely preparation of the Institute's work programme.

135. The Board decided to hold its eighteenth session during the third week of February 1998 at INSTRAW headquarters in Santo Domingo.

XI. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

136. The seventeenth session of the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW was held at the Institute's headquarters in Santo Domingo from 17 to 21 February 1997. The Board held seven meetings.

137. The session was opened by the President of the Board, D. Gail Saunders. She welcomed all the Board members, especially the two new members, María Jonas (Austria) and Mona Chemali Khalaf (Lebanon), as well as the ex officio members, the observers representing member States and the representatives of organizations within and outside the United Nations system. The President also welcomed Eduardo Latorre, Secretary of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, and Gladys Gutierrez, Secretary of State of the Dominican Republic and Director-General of the General Directorate for the Advancement of Women, who was the ex officio member of the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW representing the host country.

138. The President informed the Board of the recent appointment of Angela King as Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. Ms. King attended the seventeenth session of the Board in her capacity as ex officio member and representative of the Secretary-General.

139. In her opening remarks, the President of the Board stated that in spite of the many difficulties and uncertainties, over the past year INSTRAW had not only survived but had been productive. It had made its presence felt at international conferences and completed some projects and publications despite staff vacancies in high-level posts. She also reported that following the meeting that she and the Vice-President of the Board, Selma Acuner, had had with some high-level officials at the United Nations, some positive developments had transpired: vacancy announcements for three professional posts had recently been circulated and the Director's post would soon be advertised.

140. As her second term as member of the Board would come to an end after the seventeenth session, she expressed to the other members of the Board, the Acting Director and the staff of INSTRAW her best wishes for the future. In conclusion, the President expressed her gratitude to the Vice-President for her support, as well as to the Acting Director of the Institute, Martha Dueñas Loza, for her indomitable energy in leading the Institute, and to the staff, whose endurance was highly commendable.

141. The representative of the host country, Eduardo Latorre, Secretary of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, welcomed the members of the Board and said that during the past three decades women's issues had come to the fore at the international level. He stated that the Dominican Republic was proud to host INSTRAW and that the Government would provide assistance to make it a better and stronger Institute.

142. In her capacity as ex officio member of the Board, Gladys Gutierrez highlighted the important progress that had been made at the international level in the current decade by including women in the agendas of all world conferences of the United Nations. She noted the commitment of the Dominican Republic to properly follow up these conferences. In this connection, she indicated that the role of the General Directorate for the Advancement of Women in the Dominican Republic was to ensure that women were included in the construction of a society working for the development of its population. She noted the progress that had been made at the legislative level with the recent approval of a law against domestic and sexual violence and the importance of applying the law in order to overcome one of the major obstacles affecting the advancement of women. She expressed the hope that INSTRAW would be strengthened and that its programmes, aimed at promoting gender equality in the new millennium, would be supported.

143. On behalf of INSTRAW and its staff, the Acting Director welcomed the members of the Board at its seventeenth session and expressed the hope that the session would be able to evaluate the first half of the Institute's biennial work programme and make a dynamic and fruitful analysis of some proposals that would determine the Institute's capacity to prepare future research and training strategies.

144. The Acting Director requested the Board to reflect on "how to empower INSTRAW" so that the current institutional weaknesses of the Institute could be overcome and transformed into assets before the end of the millennium. The Acting Director made an analogy between the situation of women and that of INSTRAW, both of which faced numerous obstacles. To that end, she noted the institutional, political, financial, economic and social barriers affecting women. The Acting Director emphasized that despite the limited financial contributions provided by member States, INSTRAW did not have debts or deficits and had managed to implement various programmes that would be reviewed at the current session by the Board. She reiterated the INSTRAW commitment to the achievement of equality, development and peace and concluded by requesting the Board to reflect upon what it would like the Institute to do and on what was feasible. In conclusion, the Acting Director requested that outgoing members of the Board become "Ambassadors of good will" and advise to INSTRAW.

B. Attendance

145. The following members of the Board attended the session: Selma Acuner (Turkey); Ishan Abdalla Algabshawi (Sudan); Esther Asthon (Bolivia); Fatima Benslimane Hassar (Morocco); María Jonas (Austria); Noëlie Kangoye (Burkina Faso); Mona Chemali Khalaf (Lebanon); Els Postel-Coster (Netherlands); Gail Saunders (Bahamas); and Renata Siemienska-Zochowska (Poland).

146. The following ex officio members of the Board also attended: the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and representative of the Secretary-General; the representative of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), representing all the regional commissions; the representative of the host country (Dominican Republic); and the Acting Director of INSTRAW. Also present were the representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and the representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

C. Election of officers

147. At the 1st meeting, in accordance with rule 7 of its rules of procedure, the Board elected the following officers by acclamation.

President: Selma Acuner (Turkey)

Vice-President: Esther Asthon (Bolivia)

Rapporteur: Noëlie Kangoye (Burkina Faso)

148. The newly elected President thanked the members of the Board for her election and expressed her commitment to performing the functions delegated to her in the most efficient and competent manner. She continued by thanking the ex officio member representing the host country for her statement and expressed her appreciation to the host country for its continued cooperation with INSTRAW. She then highlighted the problems affecting women in a world charged with conflicts and the role that institutions for the advancement of women must play to ensure gender equality. She stated that INSTRAW, as an autonomous body, had a historical mission in the effort to achieve full equality and citizenship rights for women and men. She emphasized that the autonomous status of the Institute should be kept. The President thanked the Acting Director and the staff of the Institute for their hard work and efforts in carrying out the work of the Institute despite the well-known financial and staff limitations. She also thanked the former President of the Board. The President concluded by expressing the Board's commitment to endorsing and implementing all United Nations decisions, in particular those of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

D. Agenda

149. At the 1st meeting, the Board adopted the following provisional agenda (INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.1 and INF.1) by consensus:

1. Opening of the session.

2. Election of officers.

3. Adoption of the agenda.

4. Strategic Planning Committee meeting.

5. Progress report by the Acting Director.

6. Focal points - networking.

7. Inter-agency cooperation - regional commissions.

8. Other matters related to the functioning of the Institute.

9. Financial situation.

10. Framework for research and training for the biennium 1998-1999 and beyond.

11. Date of the next session of the Board.

12. Adoption of the report of the session.

13. Closing of the session.

150. The Board emphasized the merits of receiving substantive documents that reflected the progress and delays in the implementation of programmes, as well as the relevant administrative and financial documents during the course of the year. The Board expressed its gratitude for the documents circulated during 1996.

E. Adoption of the report of the Board on its seventeenth session

151. At the 7th meeting, on 21 February 1997, the Board adopted the report on its seventeenth session (INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.8 and Add.1).

Annex I

STATEMENT BY ANGELA KING, SPECIAL ADVISER ON GENDER ISSUES AND ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF INSTRAW

It gives me great pleasure to be here at the seventeenth session of the INSTRAW Board of Trustees as the representative of the Secretary-General. As this is the second session that I am attending, I have a deeper sense of insight and continuity.

I would like to congratulate you, Madame President, and the new bureau, Ms. Esther Asthon (Vice-President) and Ms. Noëlie Kangoye (Rapporteur), on your election and to wish you a very fruitful and collaborative term. I believe that under your leadership INSTRAW, which has continued its work over the past year despite a severe shortage of staff and resources, will gradually pick up and take the place that was originally envisaged for it in 1980 by the Copenhagen Conference as the main arm of the United Nations in gender research and training.

I also wish to bring you the warm greetings and good wishes of both the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, Mr. Nitin Desai, who has the delegated authority for interacting with INSTRAW and for ensuring that it runs as smoothly as possible in order to meet its mandates and fulfil efficiently its 1996-1997 work programme as amended and approved by the Board.

I would first like to say a few words about the administrative and financial situation of INSTRAW. At the outset I would like to express deep regret at the extensive delays in contractual arrangements, classification of posts, circulation of vacancies, and the like, which took place during 1996 largely as the result of the financial situation of INSTRAW and of the Organization as a whole.

I would say, however, that compared to a year ago there is every reason for us to be optimistic. Following an urgent letter from the former President of the Board, Dr. Saunders, Mr. Desai took immediate steps to get the Controller's views.

Upon the determination by the United Nations Controller of INSTRAW's sound financial basis for 1997, steps were taken without delay, at the initiative and with the full support of Mr. Desai, special representative of the Secretary-General for INSTRAW, to ensure the full staffing complement of INSTRAW, within resources available, to enable it to deliver its work programme for the year. I repeat, the Institute's financial situation has allowed the Controller to clear the filling of posts through 31 December 1997, with the additional proviso that "if these projections prove to be realistic at the end of 1997, the provision of standard one-year contracts could be considered for the current and the new INSTRAW staff, provided that the programme of work and the related expenditures are adjusted annually by the Board of Trustees on the basis of available income".

Consequently, a dual course of action is in train:

(a) Approval has been given to extend the appointments of existing staff in line with workload requirements, which should greatly enhance staff morale. I believe this has been done by the Acting Director; if not, it would be appropriate to do this before the end of the session;

(b) The filling of vacancies is in progress. As we speak, candidates are being evaluated for the P-2, P-3 and P-4 posts. The vacancy announcement for the Director's post is expected to be issued internally, hopefully sometime this month. I hope that all members of the Board will assist in having it circulated as widely as possible to capture a pool of candidates with the broadest possible competencies and suitability for the post. Finally, it was necessary to block one P-5 post for financial considerations. This was done in full consultation with the Acting Director.

Despite this positive news, it is important - to ensure the medium- to long-term financial stability of the Institute and to keep aboard available staff to provide programme support continuity - for the Institute to secure adequate financial support for the biennium 1998-1999. To that end, it would be useful to elicit donor's intentions at an early stage so that, by the end of 1997, the expected financial support and planned programmes could be matched as closely as possible. In order to secure donor support, it is considered by many that the Institute's research and training activities for the next biennium would benefit from a certain amount of tailoring in line with the long-term work programme of the Commission on the Status of Women and a strengthening of its cooperation with other institutions dealing with gender, particularly in the context of the ongoing reform of the United Nations.

The second important issue is programme development on gender. Since the Board's sixteenth session, the Commission on the Status of Women has been greatly strengthened in gender mainstreaming as a follow-up to the Beijing Conference. I certainly do not wish to reopen agenda item 5, taken up yesterday. However, it should be mentioned that the very important work of INSTRAW will have a much greater impact and that the much sought-after goal of "visibility" will have a greater likelihood of being achieved if programmatically INSTRAW's work is geared towards the long-term programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women.

May I add to paragraph 18 of document INSTRAW/BT/1997/R.2 on this long-term programme for the information of the Board. In March 1997, the Commission takes up:

(a) Women and the environment (special session of the General Assembly);

(b) Women in power and decision-making;

(c) Women and the economy;

(d) Women and education and training.

Twenty panellists will be starting off the debate on each topic. There will be five on each panel, comprising experts from government, civil society, United Nations organizations and one from an expert group meeting.

In 1998, the Commission on the Status of Women will take up critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action:

(a) Women under armed conflict;

(b) Human rights of women;

(c) Violence against women;

(d) The girl child (also stressed by the Board);

(e) Mid-term review of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action.

These planned panels and dialogues will enable the Commission more readily to formulate, through the moderator and the vice-chairpersons, a set of agreed recommendations for transmittal to other intergovernmental bodies (the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly at its special session on Agenda 21).

Further developments include the following:

(a) On 28 January 1997, the Secretary-General established the post of Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, combining both Mrs. Green's former post and that of the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW). It is now held by me and I report directly to the Secretary-General on all issues affecting gender and to Mr. Desai on the advancement of women. The focal point for women will be transferred to my office;

(b) The ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality was established and will be chaired by the Special Adviser. The Committee, unlike the other three inter-agency task forces on conference follow-up, has multiple functions - it deals with operational activities, policy analysis, and research and policy coordination; it is not time limited; and it is therefore a major vehicle for mainstreaming gender in all United Nations activities. At its next meeting, on 5 and 6 March 1997, it will examine indicators, accountability, women in peace and security, and other issues. This Committee also has a role in the development, implementation and monitoring of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001, scheduled for mid-term review in 1998. This plan deals with the work of all agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and is focused on the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action;

(c) Another recent example of United Nations cooperation was the meeting sponsored by UNDP (5-7 February) to bring in resident coordinators from 20 countries that had participated in a pilot project on mainstreaming a gender perspective. Guidelines were issued. I should also refer to Mr. Desai's letter

to Mr. Speth, Administrator of UNDP, encouraging resident representatives to provide support to national machineries and consultative processes for the advancement of women and assist in the preparation of national strategies or action plans for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe also contributed to a subregional conference of senior governmental experts on the implementation of the Platform for Action in Bucharest in September 1996, where a model national action plan was elaborated. DAW, from its trust fund, hopes to have the plan available in all six official languages of the United Nations by this summer.

Other developments include the addition of a yearly session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), to overcome the backlog of over 50 States parties' reports. There was tremendous financial assistance from UNIFEM to enable non-governmental organizations to attend the sessions.

The third important issue is cooperation between INSTRAW and DAW. I warmly welcome and greatly appreciate the cooperation mentioned in the documents between DAW and INSTRAW. Of eight expert group meetings or workshops run by DAW, INSTRAW and DAW have successfully cooperated in the organization of two held in Santo Domingo: one on political decision-making and conflict resolution (October 1996) and the other, with INSTRAW as co-sponsor, on women, population and sustainable development (November 1996). In a follow-up to the Beijing Conference, DAW is collaborating with UNIFEM and INSTRAW in preparing an electronic communication system through the use of the World Wide Web and other electronic communication technologies. The "Women Watch" initiative will be launched on International Women's Day, 7 March 1997, and demonstrated at the forty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Much depends on INSTRAW's capacity to use and provide input to the system. DAW has undertaken, at its own cost, to finance the training of INSTRAW staff as soon as the electronic capacity is in place.

Finally, the fourth issue is the reform process. The Secretary-General has expressed his full commitment to a reform of the United Nations that will enable it to fulfil the role envisaged for it in the Charter of the United Nations while, at the same time, meeting the new requirements of its Member States in a rapidly changing world. The Secretary-General has stated that he would, by July, put forward a package of reform proposals for consideration by the General Assembly later this year. I should also say that the Secretary-General regards reform as "a process and not an event".

Already, a number a important steps have been taken in the Secretariat to improve managerial efficiency, including through increasing use of modern information technology. While a number a steps have been taken to reduce costs and keep both the current budget and the forthcoming 1998-1999 budget at zero real growth, the Secretary-General has clearly indicated that reform should not be equated with downsizing; nor should it be driven by a continuous financial crisis that has created an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion among the membership not conducive to reaching a consensus on a sound package of reform measures.

The Secretary-General has also set in place important new structures at the United Nations to manage the Organization and facilitate its reform. In particular, he has established a Policy Coordination Group - in fact, a cabinet - that is composed of all the heads of the New York-based departments, funds and programmes and meets every other week under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, when he is in New York, to discuss major policy issues and developments. The Secretary-General has also established four executive committees in the following sectors:

(a) Peace and security;

(b) Humanitarian affairs;

(c) Economic and social affairs;

(d) Development operations.

The executive committees have both management and reform responsibilities; their schedule of meetings will be determined later, as will their composition. At this stage, I would only note that the committees will have policy inputs to the Policy Coordination Group for all matters falling within their areas of competence. They will also have an important role to play in facilitating the reform process. I have already communicated with the Secretary-General, requesting his support to approach these committees in my capacity as Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women to discuss with them ways to ensure that the gender dimension is appropriately reflected in their work as a truly cross-cutting measure.

The Secretary-General has also appointed Mr. Maurice Strong of Canada as Executive Coordinator for Reform. Because of conflicting travel schedules, I have not yet been able to meet with him but intend to do so upon my return to brief him on gender-related programmes in the United Nations and discuss with him how I can facilitate his work so as to ensure that gender issues are taken into account in the reform effort. It would thus be most appropriate, should the Board have any specific points which you would wish me to reflect, to raise them at this session. I also intend to seek the views of UNIFEM and its Consultative Committee in this regard.

I expect that one of the objectives that will be pursued in the reform context will be to create better linkages between policy, research and operations. A number of Governments, both donors and recipients, have called for this. As it happens, the three principal United Nations entities dealing with gender are respectively responsible for policy research and analysis (DAW), academic research and training (INSTRAW), and operations (UNIFEM). I believe, therefore, that there is a unique opportunity for our three institutions to review our activities and make suggestions to ensure enhanced cooperation and programmatic complementarity between our activities. I can definitely say that the three entities have shared a much closer working relationship during the 12 months since the last Board meeting and I intend this to continue with your help.

In order to facilitate this process, I would suggest that a consultation be held between the chairpersons of the INSTRAW Board, the UNIFEM Committee, and the bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women, together with the Directors of the concerned Secretariat entities. This would enable us to formulate, on the basis of our respective mandates and responsibilities, a consistent and coordinated approach to gender-related issues and programmes in the reform process and perhaps even begin to formulate a joint programme on key areas such as mainstreaming a gender perspective, human rights, women's economic empowerment and women in development.

I am convinced that our collective efforts in the pursuit of such an objective would go a long way towards ensuring a sound financial basis for United Nations gender programmes, providing them with an effective institutional framework and securing a strong political support base for their activities.

Annex II

STATEMENT BY THE EX OFFICIO MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF INSTRAW REPRESENTING THE HOST COUNTRY (DOMINICAN REPUBLIC)

On behalf of the Government of the Dominican Republic, I should like to welcome all the members of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which is meeting in our country.

In the 1990s we have undoubtedly witnessed the achievement of progress in the process of integrating and giving greater visibility to gender issues at the international level. In various international forums, women's issues have occupied an increasingly prominent place in discussions on the formulation of human development policy. The certainty that progress will be impossible if half the world's people are marginalized from programmes designed to attain it is more striking than ever today, when the development of peoples is no longer measured by a country's economic wealth alone but also by the level of well-being and the quality of life of its inhabitants.

Recent United Nations global conferences and summits have shown us every time that the topic of gender inequality permeates all areas related to human progress. This was true at the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, where we were able to establish our right to equality as a human right. Then, in Cairo in 1994, we left no doubt about the need for women, in all their multiple aspects, to be taken into account in population and development policies with a view to mainstreaming a gender perspective, bearing in mind our disadvantaged status.

The same theme was again highlighted at the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995, where the need to invest in women as an essential condition for the progress of peoples was proved beyond all doubt. All this set the stage for the Fourth World Conference on Women, where the entire international community, represented by Governments and non-governmental organizations alike, proclaimed that resolve and action speak louder than words.

It has not been easy to gain visibility for our problems in each of these forums. Where we have made progress, we have done so by proving that there is a direct relationship between the difficulties of peoples and the lack of equal opportunities for reasons of gender, which places women at a disadvantage in almost every country of the world.

At the local level, the Dominican Republic is now undergoing a major process of redefinition. The rise of a new generation of female political leaders has given our nation fresh impetus to do our part in assuming leadership in international forums. At the same time, the new authorities have made it clear that they intend to participate in the discussions of the international community on formulating new human development strategies. With this aim in mind, our country is promoting activities in the international sphere, such as international development summits, and in regional forums including CARICOM, Lomé IV and the Caribbean Basin Initiative; it is also entering into bilateral

agreements with countries in the region with which we can establish beneficial trade relations in this environment.

The theme of gender must be addressed by any country embarking on modernization and State reform. No longer is it merely an internal process; it also involves the determination to follow up international agreements which our country has signed within the framework of a globalized economy and international relations. Through the Department for the Advancement of Women, the follow-up to the World Summit for Children and to the Platform for Action adopted in Beijing is the most reliable indicator of the Dominican State's determination and firm will to act in accordance with the international consensus on the implementation of a gender policy in order to guarantee the integration of women in the building of a society that promotes the development of its people.

The recent promulgation in the Dominican Republic of a modern and revolutionary law on domestic violence and sexual aggression of all kinds, including harassment, gives effect to the provisions of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará). On the basis of this international agreement, our country has launched activities designed to establish mechanisms for guaranteeing the full implementation of the new law in response to the problem of gender violence, one of the main obstacles to the advancement of women.

Against this backdrop of opening up to the outside world and implementing international and regional agreements, the Dominican Republic is receiving members of the INSTRAW Board of Trustees at its seventeenth session. As the host country, we welcome this meeting and attach great importance to our participation in it, consistent with a new policy of stressing and strengthening our ties with the international community. In short, we expect this meeting to result in the strengthening of INSTRAW, which will make it possible to continue supporting research and programmes that promote the integration of women in development, with the aim of ensuring that gender equality is in place when we enter the new millennium.